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BOSTON'S ADMIRABLE ART MUSEUM.

MR. ROBINSON'S CATALOGUE OF THE CLASSICAL ANTIQUITIES—THE DRAWING AND PAINTING SCHOOLS—AN EXHIBITION OF PRINTS.

I MENTIONED in my last the then forthcoming catalogue of the casts of Greek and Roman sculpture in the Museum of Fine Arts, by the accomplished young archæologist, lately chosen curator of classical antiquities of the Museum, Edward Robinson. This catalogue is now published, and a very interesting and useful little book it is. Mr. Robinson was a member of the Assos expedition, and has spent several years altogether in the study of the remains of classical art, not only in the great museums of Europe, but on the soil of Greece and Italy, and in the very trenches where the treasures of that art are still being unearthed. His knowledge, therefore, is of that kind that has got past vaunting itself. There is no pedantic display of book-learning on the one hand or consciousness of his authority as expert on the other, to weary or irritate. Waiving all that, he goes about his task of giving in compact form, so that he who runs through the Museum may read, all that he knows about the objects enumerated. He is simple and familiar in language, straightforward and brief in style, and so manages to pack the contents of big, dry books into a readable paragraph. For the specialist, student and scholar there are abundant references and citations pointing the way for exhaustive study of a given object; for the tolerably well-informed amateur glimpses of the practical experiences of the collector, or of the profounder learning of the archæologist, that brighten old things with new lights, and for the hasty and uninformed visitor a sufficient summary of the history and mythology relating to the subject in hand. It is not every learned specialist who is so considerate, without letting his reader feel any condescension.

Under the title of each object is given first, in small type, the condensed history and description of the object as an "object"—that is, where it was found, when, and by whom, to what collections or museums it has belonged, its material and dimensions (metric), and in what catalogues or works it has been "published." Then follows the full explanation of the importance, character and significance of the object. Many and diverse theories advanced by different commentaries are stated, and finally the cataloguer's own opinion is given, and it generally strikes the reader as the most candid and most catholic, if not the most decisive, one. For example, under the "Leukothea Relief, so-called," after the description and statement of Winckelmann's theory regarding it, we are told: "Comparison with archaic grave monuments discovered since Winckelmann's time shows that the relief belongs to that class of works, but whether the representation has a mythological or an every-day significance is not easily determined. It is often explained as a family picture in which the deceased mother is represented playing with her child, her family about her. An objection to this theory is that the husband and father is not present. The small figure, too, appears to be not only female but an adult. It seems more probable, therefore, that the two larger figures are goddesses, distinguished from mortals by their size, as is usual in early Greek art, and that the relief represents the reception of a woman into the lower world by the Great Goddesses Demeter and Persephone. If this explanation is correct, Demeter is the seated figure wearing the 'sphendone,' a form of coronet, and Persephone stands opposite her. The smaller figures are mortals, members of the family, who bring offerings (cf. the Spartan reliefs on the adjoining wall), etc." In the note on "Figure Mounting a Chariot" we read, "This is a work of the Attic school, which, as mentioned above was largely under the influence of the Ionic, but differed from it in this, that while the Ionic sought to avoid the necessity of modelling the human figure by clothing it heavily with drapery, the Attic artists at an early date strove to emancipate themselves from this weakness, and to show the form through the drapery." Again, in describing the "Grave Stele from Bœotia," Mr. Robinson writes: "On the base of this stele—not shown in the cast—is a metrical inscription, which, translated, reads, 'Alxenor, the Naxian, made this; only look at it!' Although this invitation may not excite in us the admiration which is evidently expected, the inscription is valuable because it shows that the sculptor belonged to the Ionic school, Naxos being an Ionic state. The relief, therefore, bears important testimony to the extent of the influence of that school on early Greek art, being an instance of the employment of an Ionic sculptor in the heart of Greece and in an un-Ionic locality." Everywhere the knowledge of the expert archæologist is freely placed at the disposal of the reader. In speaking of the sculptures from the Temple of Athena in Ægina, the cataloguist observes: "Freedom of action, a great stumbling-block to the early sculptors, is here attained with considerable success, even without the tree-stumps and other artificial supports to which even later sculptors resorted. Each figure rests easily and firmly upon no other support than the feet, even when the weight of a shield is added on one side. Archaism is most apparent in the treatment of the heads. The hair is stiff and wiry, the eyes are expressionless, and the faces wear the proverbial 'Æginetan smile.' In the development of Greek sculpture the head was the last member that received perfect treatment, a circumstance due to the fact that Greek artists regarded the body, not the face, as the chief vehicle of expression, and until the beginning of the fourth century B.C. were more or less indifferent to the latter. The proportions are also characteristic of the archaic style, the shoulders being broad and the hips narrow. The manner in which the figures are treated is strongly suggestive of early bronze work, in which the Æginetan sculptors excelled."

The Museum sculptures are divided into five rooms and for introduction to each of the groups thus formed the catalogue gives a succinct but vivid historical sketch, touching with truly admirable skill in condensation on the salient and characteristic points of the epoch represented. The outline, rapid as it is, seems to omit no essential to understanding the social life, politics and artistic development of the Greek commonwealths, and all is told in terms as popular, lively, and easy as they are rich in suggestion of full stores of learning—clear, polished and elegant. Many extracts might be cited to show this from the account of Olympia and of its recovery by excavation, from the descriptions of the Parthenon and its frieze, and from the introduction to the last or fifth Greek room of Hellenistic art, which is thus concluded: "The chief characteristics of the sculpture of the Hellenistic age may be summed up as a love of display and sensationalism, an absence of creative power, and marvellous technical perfection." With such bits of criticism, with the thread of the historic and artistic development carefully kept in hand, with the pleasant, unpretentious and unaffected style, with the scholarly correlation of facts and theories, with the intimate technical details, with the revelations of imitation and reproduction possible only to an expert and practical knowledge of the objects, and how the modern world comes by them, this catalogue of Mr. Robinson's is a most valuable manual of instruction, as well as a most delightful companion for the student and the amateur.

The Museum schools of drawing and painting show in their last exhibition that the drawing taught there would have nothing to fear from comparison with the best work of Parisian ateliers as regards black-and-white—particularly as regards the stump-finished drawing from the nude model. Such brilliant flesh surfaces, such subtlety of delineation of form and texture leave little or nothing to be desired in that line. It is confessed, however, that the attainment of skill in painting is nowhere near equal. Whether it be in the "atmosphere" or in the school methods—the absence, that is, of a fraternity of first-rate painters—it seems to be still necessary to admit that for painting the pupil must still seek "abroad."

Mr. S. R. Koehler is to signalize his entrance upon his duties as curator of the print department of the Museum with a special collection and exhibition of the etchings of Rembrandt. No one could be better qualified to make such an exhibition what it should be, whether for the credit of the Museum or the glory of the master. If either one or both of the great paintings of Rembrandt, now in New York, that of Mr. Schaus or that of Mr. Marquand, could be obtained for the keystone of the exhibition, the event would be memorable indeed. I understand that the attempt is to be made Will New York resist such an invitation to bring Boston to her knees?

GRETA.

THE following is the usual palette of Sir Frederick Leighton, President of the Royal Academy: Ivory black, cappat brown, burnt Sienna, raw Sienna, Roman ochre, yellow ochre, French Naples yellow, aureolin, cadmium. He supplements this with lemon yellow (pale and dark), flake white, vermilion, Venetian red, Indian red, rose madder, cobalt, emerald, oxide of chromium. In his skies he uses cobalt, pale lemon and vermilion. For flesh: Cobalt and emerald, oxides of chromium (mixed with white in gradations), vermilion and lake (mixed with white in gradations), yellow ochre, Roman ochre, and burnt Sienna.

FRUIT-PAINTING IN OILS.

V.—PEACHES, PEARS, PLUMS AND MELONS.

ONE of the most beautiful, as well as one of the most difficult of all subjects to manage successfully is the peach. In its richness, purity of color and refinement it surpasses almost all other fruit, and for this reason requires great skill and delicate feeling for its proper interpretation. There are many who paint peaches and think they do them well, perhaps because they sell them readily, just as there are many portrait-painters who please their patrons sufficiently to derive a satisfactory revenue from their pictures; but the painter of fruits cannot depend for the real excellence in his work upon such evidence. A perfect peach of one of the finer varieties is as difficult to represent, with all its delicate softness, tenderness and bloom, as the blushing cheek of maidenhood, and he who can paint this fruit *well* can paint flesh well.

In my own case I freely acknowledge that peaches give me more trouble than any other subjects, and afford me less satisfaction when completed. However, a long experience, and the study and trial of many different methods, may justify me in giving a few directions as to their representation.

The greatest difficulty in painting a full ripe peach fresh from the tree is to preserve its softness and delicacy, with all its pearly bloom without disturbing the exquisite purity of its color, and this can only be done, in my opinion, in one way, namely, by laying it in at first broadly in the simplest manner, using few colors, but not sparingly, and interpreting only the *general* tone of the fruit, both in its light and shade, without attempting to imitate all its variety of tints, keeping the illuminated side lower in tone than it is in reality, and the part in shadow *less* dense.

After this first painting has become so well set and dry that the color would not adhere to the finger if it were brought in contact with it, the painter can proceed with the second and *final* sitting, leaving nothing to be retouched; above all avoid glazing, for, depend upon it, nothing is more hurtful. Glazing may add brilliancy, but it will be at the expense of that bloomy softness and delicacy which are the chief beauties of the fruit. So far as my experience goes, the above is the simplest and best method of procedure in order to preserve those characteristics. In the second painting not a particle of *positive* color should be used—nothing but tints made from the different colors by the admixture of white, for, however warm and rich and positive the tones may seem in the real fruit, the close and careful observer will soon learn to see and to *feel* the presence of gray, gray everywhere, in shadow as well as light.

There are many kinds of pears, any of which may serve as models for the painter, and the difficulties in the portrayal of which are easily surmounted by intelligent observation and well-directed industry. In painting a pear, take, for instance, the "duchess" as being, perhaps, the most picturesque. The "prima" or ground painting may be done in a similar manner to that of the peach just described, but the finishing is quite different. It being a much coarser and less refined fruit, more positive colors and less delicate tints are used. For instance, when the pear is thoroughly matured and fully ripe it is generally of a golden yellow; many have a bright blush on the side which has been exposed to the sun. For the yellow use light and deep cadmium and yellow ochre; in the shadow, deep cadmium, raw umber and burnt Sienna; for the red flush, vermilion and burnt Sienna; in the deepest shadow, a little Vandyck brown. Particular attention must be given to the spot of direct light. Remember, it is never pure white, but rather a gray, and partakes, in a measure, of the color beneath; it should be lost by subtle gradations in the surrounding tones. Most "duchess" pears are rough and swarthy, and of an uneven surface, abounding in patches of rich browns and greens, all of which peculiarities give the artist fine opportunities for strength of effect and fascinating color. The most *popular* pictures I have painted from this fruit as a subject have been the simplest, viz., several of the finest specimens I could procure disposed in a careless manner upon a piece of deep maroon or crimson plush.

There are other varieties of the pear calling for somewhat different treatment, which the intelligent amateur will readily appreciate and have little difficulty in applying.

Dark purple plums, although apparently easy of imitation from their uniformity of tone, are, in fact, just the opposite. A ripe plum gives one an impression of soft, luscious *meatiness*, a toothsome, delicious quality which I find difficult of intelligible definition. However, the amateur will *feel* that which I wish to convey, and his effort must be to interpret this quality with success; failing in this, his plum is but a piece of painted marble or colored wax. Failure in giving the soft, fleshy character to a plum is, perhaps, as frequent as the unsuccessful rendering of a peach. In order to assist the amateur, let me say that he must take especial pains to perceive by close study many more tones and tints in his subject than a casual glance affords, some of these are so delicate that it will be found hard to retain and imitate them. Yet it is the successful rendition of these seeming trifles that will give to his picture the truth and beauty of nature, so far as paint can give them.

The colors I use for the plum under consideration are as follows: deep madder carmine, burnt Sienna, Indian red, Vandyck brown and French ultramarine; perhaps there may be reflected half-lights here and there, where the introduction of a little raw umber might be required. There are other varieties of the fruit in the painting of which a different line of pigments will have to be used; but I trust the young artist will understand, from what has been said, how to manage them.

Water-melons and cantaloupes, though large, cumbrous and ungraceful, are, under proper conditions, very interesting and pictorial subjects for representation. Of course they should never be painted by themselves, but with the addition of certain smaller fruit, such as peaches, pears, grapes and currants, etc., with vines, stems and leaves.

Get a water-melon, for instance, not over ripe, and of a rich carnation interior. Do not cut it, but *break* it, if possible, into three parts. Let this be the centre of your picture—the point of attraction. Then around it place other smaller fruit: a cantaloupe (uncut), with a portion of stem, if you can procure it; then a few peaches, with some leaves and stems, and so on. Such a composition will require a good-sized canvas, but do not permit this to confuse or frighten you. After what has already been said in regard to composition, the intelligent amateur, it is to be hoped, will have little difficulty in making his design pleasing and effective.

As it would be exceedingly inconvenient, and involve considerable expense, to have all your subjects in front of you before you began the drawing, and as it is imperatively necessary to paint the melon, after it is broken, as soon as possible, I would advise a rough but well-studied sketch in charcoal to be made upon the canvas before you buy your fruit. This must be well thought out both in regard to line and color, continually aiming at grace and avoiding stiffness. Then procure your fruit and place it. You will doubtless make some alterations, as, with the reality before your eyes, new suggestions of line and color will naturally arise; these, however, can readily be made to harmonize with, or *fit* your composition. Now paint your melon carefully, yet broadly and expeditiously, using for the red, Chinese or English vermilion; a very little light cadmium and white to give it a roseate hue. The deep markings around the seeds, and the cavities from whence some have fallen, paint in with crimson lake or madder carmine, with a little burnt Sienna added thereto. If the seeds are dark, use Vandyck brown for them, not forgetting the little speck or streak of direct light on each.

It will be found troublesome, perhaps, to give that crisp, frosty surface which the meat of a ripe, fresh melon presents, yet this seeming difficulty can easily be overcome by taking a large, clean, well-worn bristle brush (after the reds are in place), filling it with white, rather stiff, and gently putting it over those parts required. In painting the rind one must be guided by his own intelligence, as there are such differences in the green tones of the various kinds of melons that it would be a tedious and needless task to go into minutiæ.

Now your melon must be abandoned for the present, while you "get in" the surrounding fruit. The cantaloupe should be in close proximity to the melon, yet back of it. The small fruit may occupy some space in front and also be placed so as to break any harsh or continuous lines made by the larger fruit, filling up ungraceful gaps or spaces here and there, and by proper care and attention developing successfully all the harmonies of line and color of which the subject may be susceptible.

It is no easy matter to succeed well in representing the rough, corrugated surface of a cantaloupe. It has been my practice to paint it in at first in a warm, olive tone; the side to the light a mixture of yellow ochre and light green with, perhaps, a little raw umber, adding, in the shadows, more umber, burnt Sienna, orange cadmium and Vandyck brown, taking care to indicate with decision the hollows that mark the divisions. At the second sitting paint rather carefully the rough, interlaced, corded appearance of the rind. A mixture of yellow ochre, raw umber and white, will give the required tone. Now, if the water-melon be dry, glaze all the reds with pure rose madder and plenty of it, and then retouch, as memory dictates, those parts which require it, or if memory be deficient and not to be relied upon, get another melon.

A. J. H. WAY.

Art Notes and Hints.

BE careful in enlarging or reducing a picture to preserve the comparative proportions. Consider the ratio of the measurements. If you double the length and width of a picture, you have four times its surface; if you treble the length and width, you have nine times its surface. Of course a corresponding reduction of length and width will give the square root of the surface.

[From Virgil Williams's Notes.—Overland Monthly.]

YOU have to use charcoal with extraordinary care. You must not leave it around, or the dress of a lady or Joe's duster will carry off a week's work in a moment. I once had a great row about a charcoal drawing. The drawing-board I had turned against the wall at night, and in the morning there was nothing on the paper. I accused —— of dusting it off, but there was a little hole in the wall behind the board, and a current of air had cleared the drawing off as perfectly as possible.

* * *

YOU (I was three months working at Venus of Milo) have one thing to congratulate yourself on, that you have learned to love this Venus. It is only the artist who really appreciates her beauties. It is a custom among dilettanti to gush over her, but they only follow the lead of artists. To see, feel, and really appreciate the beautiful expression of the face, the divine expression, also the soft undulations of the breast and the voluptuous lips, it is necessary to try to draw them.

* * *

DO not use the term "reflection" and "shadow" indiscriminately. Young ladies almost always speak of reflections as shadows—shadows of trees in water, etc. Trees or other objects do not cast shadows on the surface of water unless the water is muddy or discolored. The shadow on clear water is projected on the bottom. Many artists will dispute this fact, but it is because they have not clearly observed the things in nature.

* * *

REMEMBER as long as you live that a purchaser always likes a picture better after he has paid for it than before.

* * *

ALL young painters have a habit of making the shoulders of a girl like those of a man.

* * *

THE following is a summary of Virgil Williams's method of portrait-painting, as it was taught to his pupils for many years in his San Francisco studio:

Draw in charcoal. Get the general proportions of the head in slight, yet clear, lines. In drawing the head in charcoal in order to paint, we do not go so much for outline as for effect, and always make the eyes dark masses. Place the proper masses of lights and shadows, and add principal details. If there is too much charcoal in the drawing, do not let the dust stay or it would spoil the effect of the color. Rub the drawing over slightly and fix with fixative. Let it then dry.

Use a little vermilion in the parts where you see the most red. Little cobalt in the edges of the shadows or where it gets gray. Go ahead with the rest of the picture and the background. Never make anything hard or positive in the beginning. Get all whites covered as quickly as possible.

Leave it until it is nearly or quite dry. Now begin with the proper painting. Before you put on your color, always take a damp cloth and wipe the picture. Do so in all subsequent paintings. Then rub lightly a little bitumen over the whole picture. This makes the after-painting unite with the first. The same with a little oil in subsequent paintings.

Use big brushes.

Begin with lights. Paint the lights solidly, the half-tints less so, and the shadows very thin.

If your model has a fair complexion, it is well to use cobalt and Naples yellow thinly in the half-tints and lights, and cobalt and yellow ochre very sparingly in the shadows.

Keep white out of the shadows. In a dark complexion there is hardly any green in the shadows. Use cobalt, vermilion and Naples yellow for the lights, and cobalt, vermilion, and yellow ochre, and a little bitumen very thinly for the shadows.

Keep the colors pure and fresh. Do not mix more than three colors together.

Always get the original force of values of the colors in the first painting; afterward make your colors perfect by glazing and repainting.

If you can't get exactly what you want, get it as near as you can; then let it dry and glaze.

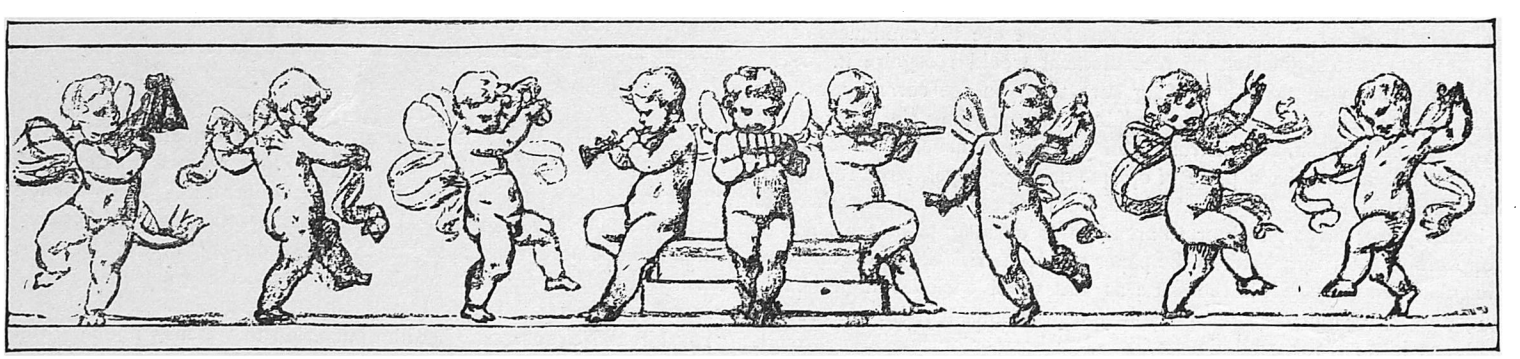
The colors of the face are divided, thus: The forehead, white or yellow; the middle, red or carnation; the chin, blue or cool gray.

Do not get your dark parts too black. If darks are to be worked over, do so by glazing.

Do not pay too much attention to details. Do not paint like a house-painter; *i. e.*, do not put on a smooth expanse.

Let all the edges be soft. When you paint up to the hair, so paint that the hair and flesh will blend in the shadows.

In the subsequent paintings, advance by giving more attention to the characteristic details of the head, and employing delicate touches of glazing and scumbling alternately to improve and render as perfectly as possible what has already been done. Only, never do anything *carelessly*. Smaller brushes are only used in finishing.



FACSIMILE OF A SKETCH BY PRUD'HON. SUITABLE FOR THE DECORATION OF THE FRONT OF AN UPRIGHT PIANO.